

Norm



al/EPA

March 6, 1997

Department of  
Toxic Substances  
Control

Pete Wilson  
Governor

400 P Street,  
4th Floor  
P.O. Box 806  
Sacramento, CA  
95812-0806

Mr. Fernando Nieves  
12563 Caballero Court  
Victorville, California 92392

James M. Strock  
Secretary for  
Environmental  
Protection

RECYCLING OF RESIDUE PROPANE FROM GAS CYLINDERS

Dear Mr. Nieves:

Your letter addressed to the Department of Toxic Substances Control's (DTSC) Office of Pollution Prevention and Technology Development was forwarded to DTSC's Resource Recovery Section for response. I apologize for the delay in responding to your letter which essentially requested confirmation from DTSC that propane could be extracted from propane gas cylinders without being regulated as a hazardous waste.

According to your letter, the residue propane would be extracted from propane cylinders (5 gallons or smaller) utilizing a vacuum pump system. The pump system would extract the residue propane from the cylinder under negative pressure. To assure the cylinders are empty, they will be left at atmospheric pressure once they are disconnected from the pump system. The extracted propane would be transferred to a 500 gallon storage tank prior to resale as propane fuel to consumers for such items as forklifts or barbecues. The empty cylinders would be sent to a scrap metal dealer.

Based on the information in your letter, DTSC believes that the discarded propane cylinders from which the propane is extracted could not qualify for the recycling exclusions or exemptions in Health and Safety Code (HSC), section 25143.2, because the availability of any of those exclusions is limited by HSC, section 25143.2(e). HSC, section 25143.2(e)(3) states that materials burned for energy recovery, used to produce a fuel, or contained in fuels are not eligible for a recycling exemption or exclusion pursuant to HSC, section 25143.2.

Also, I have reviewed the surplus material definition and I do not believe it is pertinent to your case. The fact that the propane gas has to be extracted (i.e. reclaimed) from the cylinder before it can be used makes the surplus material designation inapplicable to your situation. The extraction process constitutes hazardous waste treatment



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because the intent and design of the operation involves not only removal of the propane from the cylinder but also modification of the cylinder itself to render it non-hazardous. Therefore, the propane gas cylinders from which the gas is to be removed would have to be managed as hazardous wastes, and the removal of the gas (i.e., the treatment process) would be subject to applicable authorization (e.g., permitting) requirements. The emptied propane gas cylinders can be managed as scrap metal.

For further information about these requirements, please call DTSC's regional office in Long Beach at (310) 590-4868. If you have questions regarding this letter, please call me at (916) 322-4742 or write to me at the letterhead address.

Sincerely,



Claudia Moore  
Resource Recovery Section

cc: Mr. Douglas Synder  
San Bernardino County  
Environmental Health Services  
Environmental Management Group  
385 North Arrowhead Avenue  
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Mr. Larry Matz, Chief  
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Mr. Donald Johnson, Chief  
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cc: Mr. Norman Riley, Chief  
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